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RELICS OF ROMAN OCCUPATION

Interesting Finds in the Excavations at Silchester, in England.

The result of last summer's labors in the excavation of the Roman city of Silchester—about ten miles to the southwest of Reading—may be seen in the rooms of the Society of Antiquarians, under whose auspices the work is carried on. The committee has been systematically engaged with this labor for six successive seasons, none of which has been more fruitful than the last as regards both the structural restoration of the city and individual finds.

About half the area—100 acres—with in the walls—has been thoroughly explored, but it is anticipated that several more years' work will be required before the Romano-British city can be regarded as completely disclosed. An expenditure of at least £5,000 a year is needed for the work, which in some respects is of unequalled archaeological and historic interest, as nowhere else have so many houses, temples and public buildings of the period been discovered, and no other place has yielded a forum or a Christian church, and with some justice the committee claims that the exploration of Silchester is the beginning of the history of the civil occupation of Britain by the Romans.

The excavations last year were begun on May 7, and continued with no break, except for harvest, until the middle of October. An area of about three and one-half acres was examined, on which were two insulae (XIII. and XIV.), of which insula XIII. was clearly shown to have been occupied by the dyers, who, according to previous discoveries, worked in this portion of the city.

The real interest was centered in insula XIV., which was almost entirely covered by the foundations of two large and important houses. The western house of the two was of the courtyard type, but different from others of the kind in having the fourth side, which is usually open or nearly closed by a wall, covered by a range of large chambers with mosaic floors, some of the mosaics being of large size and good workmanship and in such good condition that three out of four were taken up and properly mounted for future exhibition at the Reading museum.

The eastern house also disclosed remarkable examples of beautiful mosaic pavements and rich panels for the walls.

Another pavement was interesting both on account of the coarse workmanship, indicating a late date, and also for the pattern, which marked the position of the table and couches in the triclinium, of which it formed the floor. The most remarkable feature, however, in this house was the small chapel containing the base of a detached shrine for the household gods, a feature not hitherto found at Silchester.

One of the most interesting discoveries was that of a block of wood through which passed two large and perfect lead pipes, while the chase for another was cut in front. This arrangement, it has now been ascertained, represented when complete the force pump, described by Vitruvius as the "machina ctesibian." This is believed to be the first example of Roman hydraulic machinery discovered in Britain.

The most beautiful of the finds is a small pillar-molded bowl of deep sapphire blue streaked with white and yellow spots, which fortunately has been perfectly restored. No other complete example of this kind of imported glass has hitherto been found in this country.—London Times.

Thibet's Picture Tree.

From time to time wonderful stories have been circulated in Europe concerning a mysterious tree in Thibet, which has been called "the tree of 10,000 pictures." Travelers have related that on each leaf of this sacred tree, on the branches and all over the trunk, are letters of the Thibetan alphabet or religious pictures; it was even asserted only a short time ago that a large sum of money had been offered for a cutting from this marvelous tree by a traveler who had seen it.

Botanists have smiled at and ridiculed the existence of such a tree, only to be met with the assurance that it had been seen. At last the truth has been made known by a Buddhist convert to Christianity.

In the village of Loussa is a monastery of 3,000 lamas or Buddhist priests. To support these priests a considerable sum of money is required, so at some far-off time the idea of this tree was evolved. On a moonless night in spring one of the lamas armed with a set of stamps, imprints upon the leaves and bark of the tree the characters of the alphabet, short invocations to Buddha and various rough outline drawings of priests and religious symbols.

The leaves and pieces of bark are sold to the credulous believers and visitors, and the money thus obtained helps to support the grand army of lamas.

Professor in English (to young man)—How would you punctuate the following: "The beautiful girl, for such she was, was passing down the street." Student—I think, professor, I would make a dash after the beautiful girl.—Woonsocket Reporter.

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